

NewsRelease



Public Service Alliance of Canada | Representing 160,000 workers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 21, 2009

Picket lines are up at the Museum of Civilization and War Museum

Workers on strike, seeking fair working conditions and protections against contracting out

OTTAWA/GATINEAU—Workers are on strike at the Canadian Museum of Civilization and the War Museum.

Represented by the Public Service Alliance of Canada, the 420 workers are demanding the same protections that are in place for other museum workers in the Ottawa/Gatineau region. The Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation (CMCC) continues to deny their demands for workplace fairness and protections against contracting out.

The Canadian Museum of Civilization and the War Museum had the highest attendance and brought in more revenue than any other museum or gallery in the National Capital Region last year. Meanwhile, workers' salaries at the two museums are lower than all of the other federal museum workers in the Ottawa/Gatineau – in some cases 40 per cent lower.

“The mandate from our members is to close the wage gap and protect them against the threat of their jobs being contracted out,” says Maria Fitzpatrick, PSAC Vice-President for the National Capital Region. “As it stands, ticketing agents and several security guard positions, as well as cafeteria and boutique employee jobs have already been contracted out to private companies. Our workers are seeking some guarantee that they won't lose their jobs, especially in the face of an economic recession.”

Melissa Ferland is a professional actor who works at the Museum of Civilization. As a member of the floor staff, she sees how the museum has trouble recruiting and retaining employees.

“All we are seeking is fair treatment that is equivalent to the way that other museum workers are treated in the region,” she said. “We are passionate about our work and care deeply about the reputation of the museums. All we want is a fair contract, so we can get back to our jobs and continue to support our families.”

Negotiations with the Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation (CMCC) began in April and talks broke down in August. The workers voted 92 per cent in favour of strike action on August 27. Sessions with a federal mediator were held on September 16, 17 and 18, during which the museums' management demanded serious concessions and refused to address the workers' fundamental concerns, especially in regard to salary and contracting out.

- 30 -

For more information or to book interviews:

Ariel Troster, PSAC Communications: 613-292-8363 (cell)

41-210909